

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 048869
ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SIG-03 NEA-10 IO-14 EUR-12 ARA-14
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00
PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
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DRAFTED BY AF/P:BARUSSELL:MR
APPROVED BY AF/P:RWHOLLIDAY
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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

USINT BAGHDAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DOHA IMMEDIATE

USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY SANA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

XMT AMEMBASSY BANGUI

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 048869

UNCLAS STATE 048869

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT OF STATE PRESS BRIEFING FEB. 24, 1978

FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE NOON BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 24, 1978:

Q: THERE IS A UPI REPORT FROM WASHINGTON THAT SAYS THREE RUSSIAN GENERALS ARE DIRECTING ETHIOPIAN COMBAT OPERATIONS FROM A HEADQUARTERS NEAR THE FRONT, U.S. GOVERNMENT SOURCES SAID TODAY, AND THEN IT GOES ON TO IDENTIFY THE TOP ONE AS A THREE-STAR SOVIET GENERAL. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US?

A: WHAT CAN I TELL YOU? FIRST, I CAN SAY GENERALLY WHAT WE HAVE SAID BEFORE, THAT THERE ARE SOME 1,000 RUSSIAN PERSONNEL IN ETHIOPIA; THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PLAYING A ROLE WHICH WE HAVE DESCRIBED AS ADVISORY, MILITARY ADVISORY; THAT THE EXACT NATURE OF IT IS NOT ALTOGETHER CLEAR TO ME. BUT, ON THAT SPECIFIC QUESTION, WITH WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID AS BACKGROUND, WHAT I WILL BE GLAD TO DO IS LOOK INTO AND GET YOU AN ANSWER AS TO WHETHER THOSE SPECIFIC FIGURES, AND THE COMMAND AND CONTROL FUNCTION INCLUDED IN THAT STORY, CAN BE CONFIRMED.

Q: DOES THE TUNNEY AMENDMENT FORBID US FROM PROVIDING ADVISORS TO THE SOMALIS IF THE ETHIOPIANS CROSS THE BORDER?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 048869

A: I DON'T KNOW.

Q: OR WAS THAT TUNNEY AMENDMENT ONLY FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA?

A: I DON'T KNOW. I WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: IS THERE ANY LAW THAT YOU KNOW THAT WOULD PROHIBIT US FROM SENDING 1,000 MILITARY ADVISERS TO A NATION THAT WAS THREATENED?

A: AGAIN, I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: GOSHKO SPOKE OF THE UPI REPORT WHICH SUGGESTED THREE SOVIET GENERALS, AND IT IS MY INFORMATION THAT THERE ARE FOUR. SO, IF YOU ARE GOING TO TAKE THAT, WILL YOU TRY TO CHECK OUT WHETHER THERE ARE THREE OR FOUR, AND THAT ONE OF THEM HAS THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL WHO WAS IN COMMAND OF SOVIET FACILITIES AT BERBERA BEFORE THEY WERE KICKED OUT?

A: I HAVE SEEN A NUMBER OF SPECULATIONS. AT ANY RATE,

I WILL TAKE THE GENERAL QUESTION AND SEE IF I CAN GET YOU SOME SPECIFICS. AND ALSO WHAT ROLE THEY ARE PLAYING, NOT ONLY THEIR PRESENCE.

Q: HODDING, COULD YOU ELABORATE ON THE REMARKS THE SECRETARY MADE AT HIS PRESS CONFERENCE ABOUT SOVIET ASSURANCES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO ETHIOPIAN CROSSING OF THE BORDER? DID THE RUSSIANS SAY THAT THEY WERE MERELY RELAYING ETHIOPIAN ASSURANCES, OR THAT THEY WOULD SOMEHOW RESTRAIN THE ETHIOPIANS?

A: I BELIEVE THEY WERE RELAYING THE ASSURANCES WHICH THE ETHIOPIANS LATER THEMSELVES REITERATED TO THE AARON MISSION.

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UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 048869

Q: BUT HAVE THEY SPECIFICALLY SAID THAT SHOULD THE ETHIOPIANS CROSS THE BORDER, THEY WOULD NOT ADVISE THEM FURTHER OR WOULD NOT SUPPORT THEM OR WOULD NOT AID THEM?

A: I COULD JUST SAY THAT THAT IS GOING FURTHER INTO A SET OF CONVERSATIONS THAN I REALLY SHOULD GO, AND I WILL TAKE THAT REFUGE FIRST. BUT THE SECOND THING I WANT TO SAY TO YOU IS THAT I DON'T KNOW THE EXACT CONVERSATION AS TO THAT. I WOULD PERSONALLY DOUBT IT.

Q: WHAT ABOUT HOT PURSUIT? DO YOU HAVE ANY ASSURANCES ON SOVIET RESTRAINT IF THE ETHIOPIANS CLAIM THE RIGHT TO PURSUE?

A: I THINK THAT WHAT WE HAVE IS WHAT I HAVE GIVEN YOU, WHICH IS THE ETHIOPIAN STATEMENT TO US THAT THEY DO NOT INTEND TO GO ACROSS THE BORDER.

Q: DO YOU TAKE THAT TO MEAN IN ALL REGARDS, IN ALL RESPECTS, CROSSING BORDERS IN ANY WHICH-WAY?

A: TECHNICALLY, OBVIOUSLY, THAT IS WHAT WE TAKE IT TO MEAN.

Q: IS THERE ANY DISAGREEMENT, HODDING, BETWEEN THIS BUILDING AND THE WHITE HOUSE OVER WHETHER THE ETHIOPIANS SUPPORTED BY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS STILL PLAN AN OFFENSIVE TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH?

A: NO.

Q: SOME SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE WHITE HOUSE ARE STILL UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 048869

SAYING THAT THERE PROBABLY WILL BE AN OFFENSIVE TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH, BEGINNING OF NEXT MONTH, LAUNCHED AGAINST SOMALIA. A MAJOR COUNTER-OFFENSIVE.

A: A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AGAINST SOMALIAN FORCES?

Q: YES.

A: IN THE OGADEN. WELL, I THINK THAT THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT THEY ARE BUILDING UP TO SUCH AN OFFENSIVE. I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY ON THAT.

LET ME DO SOMETHING THAT I PROMISED EARLIER THIS WEEK I WOULD DO, SHORT OF BEING ASKED, AND THAT IS TO UP-DATE CUBAN FIGURES IN ETHIOPIA.

AS OF NOW, THE BEST FIGURES WE HAVE ARE IN A RANGE OF BETWEEN EIGHT TO TEN THOUSAND PLUS, WHICH IS TO SAY AN INCREASE OVER THE FIGURE OF FIVE, WHICH I WAS WALKING AROUND WITH A FEW DAYS AGO.

I WOULD SAY THAT A MAJORITY OF THOSE ARE MILITARY PERSONNEL.

Q: DID THEY ALL COME IN ONE TRIP?

Q: WAS IT A SHIP-LANDING THAT INCREASED IT?

A: I, AGAIN, FOR A LOT OF GOOD REASONS, WHICH I THINK YOU WOULD APPRECIATE, I AM NOT GOING TO GO INTO A BREAKDOWN OF HOW THEY GOT THERE, BUT THEY GOT THERE.

Q: HODDING, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "PLUS?"

A: I JUST MEAN THAT I AM TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT WE DO
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PAGE 06 STATE 048869

NOT HAVE A COUNTER AND A GUY STANDING THERE GOING LIKE THIS.

Q: DOES THAT MEAN MORE ARE THERE OR MORE ON THE WAY?

A: I AM TALKING ABOUT THE RANGE IS SOMEWHAT BETWEEN

EIGHT AND TEN THOUSAND PLUS, MEANING TEN THOUSAND 200 HUNDRED. I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW.

Q: ARE THERE MORE ON THE WAY?

A: I SEE NO SIGNS SO FAR THAT THERE IS ANY HALT TO THE BUILD-UP.

Q: DO WE HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF THE NUMBER OF SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN CUBA?

A: I DO NOT THINK THAT THERE IS A LARGE NUMBER. I HAVE SEEN REPORTS OF SOME SOVIET AIR PERSONNEL THERE, WHICH WE ALL HAVE SEEN. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING BEYOND THAT. I THINK THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THAT WAS NOT A NEW EXPERIENCE, THAT THEY HAVE RUN THEM THROUGH THERE BEFORE.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF THESE CUBANS ARE ACTUALLY IN COMBAT UNITS, OR MIGHT BE SEEING COMBAT?

A: I DON'T HAVE THAT YET. I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A VERY GOOD BREAKDOWN ON IT. I THINK A LOT OF THE ARRIVALS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE LAST WEEKS.

Q: YOUR EARLIER REPORTS OF CUBANS BEING IN COMBAT REFERRED TO THE OGADEN. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 048869

THEIR BEING IN COMBAT ON THE ERITREAN FRONT?

A: MY SNAP ANSWER IS NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING, BUT I WILL ALSO TAKE IT.

Q: INCLUDE PILOTS WHEN YOU TAKE IT, BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THEY ARE FLYING THE PLANES.

A: YES.

Q: THERE IS A LARGE FIGURE AND IT HAS IMPLICATIONS AND THERE IS A POLITICAL POINT THE ADMINISTRATION IS TRYING TO MAKE WHEN IT GIVES US THESE FIGURES. WE ARE NOT AT

THE "VIET-NAM KILLED" POINT YET ON CUBANS, BUT I WONDERED IF YOU COULD GIVE US ANYTHING TO ELABORATE -- I MEAN, FOR INSTANCE, WHERE DID THESE FIGURES COME BY?

A: I REALLY CAN'T GO INTO THAT.

Q: WHY? BECAUSE OF SECURITY OR INTELLIGENCE OR WHAT?

A: BECAUSE OF OBVIOUS INTELLIGENCE REASONS, BARRY.

Q: HODDING, LOOK, WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS ASKING IS THAT THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS ACCEPT WHOLE THAT EVERY WEEK THREE THOUSAND MORE CUBANS JUMP INTO ETHIOPIA. I AM SURE THAT IS POSSIBLE. BUT AT SOME POINT WE ARE GOING TO REACH THE POINT WHERE THERE ARE MORE CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA THAN THERE ARE CUBANS IN THE WORLD.

A: WHEN THAT POINT COMES, I THINK -- WILL BE BADLY STRAINED.

Q: I MEAN, WE ARE REASONABLY SKEPTICAL OF FIGURES LIKE THIS BASED ON THE VIET-NAM EXPERIENCE.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 048869

A: I WOULDN'T ARGUE YOU OUT OF SKEPTICISM. I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU THE FIGURES. WHAT I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SAY TO YOU, THOUGH, AS CLEARLY AS I COULD, IS THAT THE PROCESS IS NOT A FITS AND STARTS KIND OF THING. IT ONLY MEANS THAT THERE IS ENOUGH INPUT AT THAT POINT TO FEEL REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THAT IS WHERE IT HAS COME TO. IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THIS SUDDENLY, IN TWO DAYS -- THE LAST TIME SOMEBODY ASKED ME, I SAID, 5,000. TODAY I SAY EIGHT TO TEN.

Q: A WEEK AGO, IT WAS 3,000.

A: ALL I CAN SAY IS, I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT THAT JUST ALL HAPPENED IN ONE DAY. I KEPT TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT THERE HAS BEEN A FLOW, BUT FOR US TO GET ANY KIND OF ASSESSMENT WITH WHICH WE ARE COMFORTABLE, YOU HAVE GOT

TO DO A LOT OF CHECKING AND CHECKING BACK.

Q: CAN YOU AT LEAST SAY WHETHER THERE IS -- WHAT IS GOING ON IN ANGOLA? YOU KNOW, WHETHER THERE IS A REDUCTION THERE AND THAT THE CUBANS ARE BEING SHIFTED? DOES THAT EXPLAIN THIS BUILD-UP?

A: NO, I WOULDN'T TRY TO EXPLAIN IT BY THE NOTION THAT THE ENTIRE BULK HAS COME OUT OF ANGOLA.

Q: WELL, HAS PART OF THIS BULK COME FROM HAVANA AND PART FROM ANGOLA?

A: I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING MORE WITH IT RIGHT NOW. I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 09 STATE 048869

Q: YOU CITED A FIGURE OF BETWEEN 20 AND 25 THOUSAND IN THE PAST.

A: IN AFRICA.

Q: IN AFRICA, GENERALLY, DO YOU WANT TO AMEND THAT FIGURE NOW? WOULD YOU SAY IT IS UP OVER 30,000?

A: NO, I DON'T WANT TO AMEND ANYTHING YET. I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: HODDING, HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THIS 10,000 OR EIGHT TO TEN THOUSAND FIGURE?

A: ABOUT FOUR HOURS.

Q: WELL, THE REASON I ASK THE QUESTION IS THAT LAST WEDNESDAY, I BELIEVE IT WAS, IT MAY HAVE BEEN LAST THURSDAY, A PRIVATE CITIZEN WHO HAPPENS TO HAVE BEEN A FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE WAS SAYING ON NBC THAT THERE WERE 10,000 CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA. I THOUGHT AT FIRST HE MIGHT HAVE MISPOKEN HIMSELF, BUT NOW IT SEEMS THAT HE HAS INFORMATION THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DIDN'T HAVE.

A: THAT CAN BE YOUR CONCLUSION. I SIMPLY WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE WERE NO FIGURES THAT WERE SEEN BY YOUR BRIEFER OR BY A NUMBER OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT APPROXIMATED THAT UNTIL THE VERY IMMEDIATE PAST.

Q: THE BRITS HAVE BEEN SAYING IT.

A: I CAN, IN FACT, GIVE YOU A LOT OF SOURCES THAT SAY A LOT OF THINGS. I CAN QUOTE SOME OF YOUR STORIES FROM THREE MONTHS AGO THAT SAID THERE WERE 10,000 THERE. IT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 048869

JUST TURNED OUT IT WASN'T TRUE. BUT THERE ARE NOW AND THAT IS UNCANNY TOO.

Q: HODDING, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THE AMERICAN CONFIDENCE, U.S. CONFIDENCE, AT THIS POINT IN THE SOVIETS SUPPORTING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN LIGHT OF THE CUBAN BUILD-UP?

A: I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY SPECULATION ON THAT.

Q: YOU HAVE ASSURANCES FROM THE SOVIETS --

A: WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE ETHIOPIANS SAY THEY ARE GOING TO STOP AT THE BORDER, ASSUMING THEY GET THAT FAR.

Q: WELL, THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE REACHED 10,000 DOESN'T SUGGEST TO YOU THEY ARE GOING TO GO ACROSS THE BORDER. IN FACT, YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT THEY WON'T.

A: I AM NOT TELLING YOU WHAT I BELIEVE. I AM TELLING YOU WHAT, OF COURSE, WE STRONGLY TRUST WILL HAPPEN, HOPE WILL HAPPEN. I MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE NO CROSSING OF BORDERS. BUT WE HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT. AND ALL I CAN TELL YOU, ALL I CAN REPORT TO YOU, IS WHAT HAS BEEN TOLD TO US ABOUT INTENTIONS.

Q: ARE WE CLEAR ON WHERE THE BORDERS ARE IN THAT AREA?

THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN BORDER USED TO BE RATHER -- IN FACT, I WAS JUST LOOKING AT A STATE DEPARTMENT MAP TODAY. IT HAS A DOTTED LINE THERE AND CALLS IT PROVISIONAL.

SO, HOW ARE WE GOING TO KNOW WHEN WE GET TO A BORDER?
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 048869

A: YES. I THINK THAT IS ONE I AM NOT ABLE TO HELP WITH.

I WAS READING SOMETHING ON THAT MYSELF. I THINK THAT WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME AREA OF CONFUSION, THERE WON'T BE TOO MUCH CONFUSION.

Q: CAN YOU SEEK AN ANSWER FOR US ON -- PERHAPS WITH A MAP ATTACHED -- ON WHERE WE CONSIDER THE BORDERS OF SOMALIA TO BE SO THAT WE WILL HAVE SOME BENCHMARK AGAINST WHICH TO JUDGE THINGS MAYBE LATER ON?

A: I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

Q: IS AMERICAN POLICY, DOES IT REMAIN, AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT, THAT IF THERE IS A CROSSING WE WILL RECONSIDER OUR DENIAL OF ARMS TO SOMALIA?

A: THE AMERICAN POLICY IS EXACTLY AS THE SECRETARY STATED IT.

Q: WHICH IS WHAT?

A: EXACTLY AS HE STATED AT THE TIME OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE WHEN ASKED THAT SUBJECT: THAT WE WOULD THEN HAVE TO RE-ASSESS OUR POSITION, BUT THAT IS ALL IN THE LIGHT OF THAT EVENT. I DON'T WANT TO LEAD YOU ANY FURTHER THAN THAT.

Q: HODDING, YOU SAID A MINUTE AGO THAT YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH VARIOUS COMPUTATIONS AND MATURATIONS BEFORE YOU REACH A FIGURE THAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH. THE 8,000 TO 10,000 PLUS, THIS IS THE FIGURE WITH WHICH THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY FEELS COMFORTABLE?

A: YES.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE JUST USED IT UP ON THE HILL. THAT
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PAGE 12 STATE 048869

IS WHY I FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH IT.

Q: HODDING, THERE WAS A STORY ABOUT A WEEK AGO THAT NIGERIA, WHICH IS HEADING THE OAU COMMITTEE THERE, HAS SENT TROOPS TO ANGOLA WHO ARE REPLACING CUBAN TROOPS GOING TO ETHIOPIA AND THAT NOW THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME LOGIC IN THAT NOW.

COULD YOU COMMENT ON THAT REPORT?

ARE THE NIGERIANS GOING TO ANGOLA, SENDING TROOPS TO ANGOLA?

A: I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO CONFIRMATION ON SUCH A STORY.

Q: HODDING, SINCE WE NOW HAVE THAT INTERESTS SECTION IN CUBA, IS THIS KIND OF BUILD-UP BROUGHT? DO WE USE OUR INTERESTS SECTION TO BRING THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CUBANS?

A: I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ISSUE IS RAISED REPEATEDLY IN ONE FORM OR THE OTHER WITH THE CUBANS.

Q: SINCE THE SECRETARY'S NEWS CONFERENCE HAS IT BEEN RAISED WITH THE CUBANS?

A: I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED REPEATEDLY WITH THE CUBANS AND IN DIFFERENT PLACES. I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO SUGGEST WHERE.

Q: HODDING, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE CRYSTAL CLEAR ITS OPPOSITION TO RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AS WELL AS THE APPORTIONMENT OF ONE PART OF THE RHODESIAN LEGISLATURE.
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PAGE 13 STATE 048869

THE QUESTION IS: ARE WE ALSO OPPOSED TO THE RACIAL SEGREGATION IN THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION OR NOT?

A: I WOULD SAY AS A GENERAL STATEMENT THAT WE FAVOR OPEN SOCIETIES, DEMOCRATIC IN RACIAL TERMS AND IN ALL TERMS.

Q: WELL, IF I COULD, I REALIZE THAT AS A GENERAL STATEMENT. I WONDER IF YOU COULD MAKE A SPECIFIC STATEMENT IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION.

ARE WE OPPOSED TO THE RACIAL SEGREGATION THAT IS WRITTEN INTO THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION OR NOT?

A: LES, I DON'T THINK I HAVE EVER HAD THAT QUESTION PUT TO ME.

I WOULD FIRST HAVE TO CONFIRM WHAT IS IN THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH I WILL DO.

Q: THAT IS WONDERFUL.

A: I MEAN THEN AFTER THAT I WILL HAVE TO SEE WHETHER, IN FACT, THE ISSUE HAS ARISEN.

Q: YOU WON'T LET THIS DIE? I MEAN IT WON'T JUST DISAPPEAR?

A: LES, ONE OF US WILL NEVER LET IT DIE, I AM CONFIDENT.

Q: ALL RIGHT. FINE.

I UNDERSTAND THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO LIBERIA. SO, IT IS A VERY APROPOS QUESTION.

THE LAST TIME WE GOT SOME KIND OF A BREAKDOWN ON THE CUBANS IN AFRICA WAS A NOVEMBER 17 REPORT. COULD WE GET A NEW
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 14 STATE 048869

ONE?

A: I JUST DON'T KNOW. I WILL SEE.

Q: OR AT LEAST A FIGURE OF HOW MANY THERE ARE.

A: WE REALLY PROBABLY ARE NOT GOING TO BE DOING IT AT

GREAT REGULARITY, BUT I WILL SEE.

Q: BECAUSE THERE ARE NEW CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA BUT NOT NECESSARILY NEW CUBANS IN AFRICA.

A: YES, I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.

Q: HODDING, JUST TO COMPLETE SOMETHING YOU STATED EARLIER, THAT YOU'RE CONFIDENT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED AT DIFFERENT PLACES WITH THE CUBANS -- WHAT HAS THEIR RESPONSE BEEN?

A: I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT THE QUESTION WAS.

Q: WELL, ABOUT THE BUILDUP OF CUBANS.

A: YES, WELL AGAIN I AM NOT GOING TO GO INTO THAT. LET ME JUST SAY OUR POSITION HAS BEEN MADE VERY CLEAR TO THEM, AND WE HAVE A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON IT.

Q: HODDING, DOESN'T THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIAISON OFFICE OR AN INTEREST SECTION, MAKE IT EASIER TO DISCUSS WITH THE CUBANS THE BUILDUP?

A: YES, SURE.

Q: THEN WHY DON'T YOU GO ALL THE WAY AND ESTABLISH FULL UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 15 STATE 048869

RELATIONS?

A: BECAUSE AMONG THE REASONS THAT WE DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE WISE, IS THE BIG BUILDUP OF FORCES IN AFRICA.

Q: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY REACTION TO THIS SAUDI APPEAL TO THE ARAB LEAGUE TO SEND ARMS AND SUPPORT TO SOMALIA?

A: NO. I DON'T.

Q: YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT -- YOU DON'T FEEL THAT IT IS CONSTRUCTIVE, OR DESTRUCTIVE?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANY RESPONSE ON IT RIGHT NOW.

WHAT WE HAVE SAID GENERALLY, I COULD REPEAT AS POLICY: WE THINK AT THIS POINT THE BEST THING IS NOT FOR ANYONE TO CONTRIBUTE TO A BUILDUP OF FORCES IN THAT REGION AND IN THAT PARTICULAR CONFLICT. WE THINK IT OUGHT TO GO THE OTHER WAY AROUND.

THAT'S A REITERATION OF AN OLD POLICY BUT THAT'S IT, REALLY.

Q: HODDING, IN YOUR CONSIDERATION OF WALTER'S QUESTION,
WOULD YOU ALSO SPECIFICALLY TAKE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
THERE ARE NOW CUBAN TROOPS -- AND IF SO, HOW MANY ASSISTING

GUERRILLAS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST RHODESIA?

A: I THOUGHT I HAD TAKEN THAT AND ANSWERED IT BEFORE.

Q: YOU MAY HAVE; ALTHOUGH IN THE WAKE OF WHAT HAS BEEN
HAPPENING IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, THOSE NUMBERS MAY HAVE
CHANGED, TOO.

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PAGE 16 STATE 048869

A: O., VANCE

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PAGE 01 STATE 048869
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INFO RUFHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID 0000

AMEMBASSY LISBON

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UNCLAS STATE 048869

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 048869 SENT ACTION ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC
POSTS ABU DHABI AMMAN BAGHDAD BONN CAIRO DAMASCUS DOHA HAVANA
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UNCLASSIFIED

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UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 03 STATE 048869

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PAGE 04 STATE 048869

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Q: IS THERE ANY DISAGREEMENT, HODDING, BETWEEN THIS BUILDING AND THE WHITE HOUSE OVER WHETHER THE ETHIOPIANS SUPPORTED BY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS STILL PLAN AN OFFENSIVE TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH?

A: NO.

Q: SOME SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE WHITE HOUSE ARE STILL SAYING THAT THERE PROBABLY WILL BE AN OFFENSIVE TOWARDS THE END OF THIS MONTH, BEGINNING OF NEXT MONTH, LAUNCHED AGAINST SOMALIA. A MAJOR COUNTER-OFFENSIVE.

A: A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE AGAINST SOMALIAN FORCES?

Q: YES.

A: IN THE OGADEN. WELL, I THINK THAT THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT THEY ARE BUILDING UP TO SUCH AN OFFENSIVE. I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS ANY DIFFERENCE OF OPINION. I DON'T KNOW OF ANY ON THAT.

LET ME DO SOMETHING THAT I PROMISED EARLIER THIS WEEK I WOULD DO, SHORT OF BEING ASKED, AND THAT IS TO UP-DATE CUBAN FIGURES IN ETHIOPIA.

AS OF NOW, THE BEST FIGURES WE HAVE ARE IN A RANGE OF UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 048869

BETWEEN EIGHT TO TEN THOUSAND PLUS, WHICH IS TO SAY AN INCREASE OVER THE FIGURE OF FIVE, WHICH I WAS WALKING AROUND WITH A FEW DAYS AGO.

I WOULD SAY THAT A MAJORITY OF THOSE ARE MILITARY PERSONNEL.

Q: DID THEY ALL COME IN ONE TRIP?

Q: WAS IT A SHIP-LANDING THAT INCREASED IT?

A: I, AGAIN, FOR A LOT OF GOOD REASONS, WHICH I THINK YOU WOULD APPRECIATE, I AM NOT GOING TO GO INTO A BREAKDOWN OF HOW THEY GOT THERE, BUT THEY GOT THERE.

Q: HODDING, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY "PLUS?"

A: I JUST MEAN THAT I AM TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT WE DO

NOT HAVE A COUNTER AND A GUY STANDING THERE GOING LIKE

THIS.

Q: DOES THAT MEAN MORE ARE THERE OR MORE ON THE WAY?

A: I AM TALKING ABOUT THE RANGE IS SOMEWHAT BETWEEN EIGHT AND TEN THOUSAND PLUS, MEANING TEN THOUSAND 200 HUNDRED. I MEAN, I DON'T KNOW.

Q: ARE THERE MORE ON THE WAY?

A: I SEE NO SIGNS SO FAR THAT THERE IS ANY HALT TO THE BUILD-UP.

Q: DO WE HAVE ANY EVIDENCE OF THE NUMBER OF SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL IN CUBA?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 06 STATE 048869

A: I DO NOT THINK THAT THERE IS A LARGE NUMBER. I HAVE SEEN REPORTS OF SOME SOVIET AIR PERSONNEL THERE, WHICH WE ALL HAVE SEEN. I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING BEYOND THAT. I THINK THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THAT WAS NOT A NEW EXPERIENCE, THAT THEY HAVE RUN THEM THROUGH THERE BEFORE.

Q: HODDING, DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OF THESE CUBANS ARE ACTUALLY IN COMBAT UNITS, OR MIGHT BE SEEING COMBAT?

A: I DON'T HAVE THAT YET. I DON'T THINK WE HAVE A VERY GOOD BREAKDOWN ON IT. I THINK A LOT OF THE ARRIVALS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN THE LAST WEEKS.

Q: YOUR EARLIER REPORTS OF CUBANS BEING IN COMBAT REFERRED TO THE OGADEN. DO YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR BEING IN COMBAT ON THE ERITREAN FRONT?

A: MY SNAP ANSWER IS NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANYTHING, BUT I WILL ALSO TAKE IT.

Q: INCLUDE PILOTS WHEN YOU TAKE IT, BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THEY ARE FLYING THE PLANES.

A: YES.

Q: THERE IS A LARGE FIGURE AND IT HAS IMPLICATIONS AND THERE IS A POLITICAL POINT THE ADMINISTRATION IS TRYING TO MAKE WHEN IT GIVES US THESE FIGURES. WE ARE NOT AT

THE "VIET-NAM KILLED" POINT YET ON CUBANS, BUT I WONDERED IF YOU COULD GIVE US ANYTHING TO ELABORATE -- I MEAN, FOR INSTANCE, WHERE DID THESE FIGURES COME BY?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 07 STATE 048869

A: I REALLY CAN'T GO INTO THAT.

Q: WHY? BECAUSE OF SECURITY OR INTELLIGENCE OR WHAT?

A: BECAUSE OF OBVIOUS INTELLIGENCE REASONS, BARRY.

Q: HODDING, LOOK, WHAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS ASKING IS THAT THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS ACCEPT WHOLE THAT EVERY WEEK THREE THOUSAND MORE CUBANS JUMP INTO ETHIOPIA. I AM SURE THAT IS POSSIBLE. BUT AT SOME POINT WE ARE GOING TO REACH THE POINT WHERE THERE ARE MORE CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA THAN THERE ARE CUBANS IN THE WORLD.

A: WHEN THAT POINT COMES, I THINK -- WILL BE BADLY STRAINED.

Q: I MEAN, WE ARE REASONABLY SKEPTICAL OF FIGURES LIKE THIS BASED ON THE VIET-NAM EXPERIENCE.

A: I WOULDN'T ARGUE YOU OUT OF SKEPTICISM. I CAN ONLY GIVE YOU THE FIGURES. WHAT I HAVE BEEN TRYING TO SAY TO YOU, THOUGH, AS CLEARLY AS I COULD, IS THAT THE PROCESS IS NOT A FITS AND STARTS KIND OF THING. IT ONLY MEANS THAT THERE IS ENOUGH INPUT AT THAT POINT TO FEEL REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THAT IS WHERE IT HAS COME TO. IT DOESN'T MEAN THAT THIS SUDDENLY, IN TWO DAYS -- THE LAST TIME SOMEBODY ASKED ME, I SAID, 5,000. TODAY I SAY EIGHT TO TEN.

Q: A WEEK AGO, IT WAS 3,000.

A: ALL I CAN SAY IS, I AM NOT SUGGESTING THAT THAT JUST ALL HAPPENED IN ONE DAY. I KEPT TRYING TO TELL YOU THAT THERE HAS BEEN A FLOW, BUT FOR US TO GET ANY KIND OF ASSESSMENT WITH WHICH WE ARE COMFORTABLE, YOU HAVE GOT

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 08 STATE 048869

TO DO A LOT OF CHECKING AND CHECKING BACK.

Q: CAN YOU AT LEAST SAY WHETHER THERE IS -- WHAT IS GOING ON IN ANGOLA? YOU KNOW, WHETHER THERE IS A REDUCTION THERE AND THAT THE CUBANS ARE BEING SHIFTED? DOES THAT

EXPLAIN THIS BUILD-UP?

A: NO, I WOULDN'T TRY TO EXPLAIN IT BY THE NOTION THAT THE ENTIRE BULK HAS COME OUT OF ANGOLA.

Q: WELL, HAS PART OF THIS BULK COME FROM HAVANA AND PART FROM ANGOLA?

A: I AM NOT GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING MORE WITH IT RIGHT NOW. I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.

Q: YOU CITED A FIGURE OF BETWEEN 20 AND 25 THOUSAND IN THE PAST.

A: IN AFRICA.

Q: IN AFRICA, GENERALLY, DO YOU WANT TO AMEND THAT FIGURE NOW? WOULD YOU SAY IT IS UP OVER 30,000?

A: NO, I DON'T WANT TO AMEND ANYTHING YET. I WILL TAKE THE QUESTION.

Q: HODDING, HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD THIS 10,000 OR EIGHT TO TEN THOUSAND FIGURE?

A: ABOUT FOUR HOURS.

Q: WELL, THE REASON I ASK THE QUESTION IS THAT LAST WED-
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 09 STATE 048869

NESDAY, I BELIEVE IT WAS, IT MAY HAVE BEEN LAST THURSDAY, A PRIVATE CITIZEN WHO HAPPENS TO HAVE BEEN A FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE WAS SAYING ON NBC THAT THERE WERE 10,000 CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA. I THOUGHT AT FIRST HE MIGHT HAVE MISPOKEN HIMSELF, BUT NOW IT SEEMS THAT HE HAS INFORMATION THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT DIDN'T HAVE.

A: THAT CAN BE YOUR CONCLUSION. I SIMPLY WILL TELL YOU THAT THERE WERE NO FIGURES THAT WERE SEEN BY YOUR BRIEFER OR BY A NUMBER OF OTHER PEOPLE THAT APPROXIMATED THAT UNTIL THE VERY IMMEDIATE PAST.

Q: THE BRITS HAVE BEEN SAYING IT.

A: I CAN, IN FACT, GIVE YOU A LOT OF SOURCES THAT SAY A LOT OF THINGS. I CAN QUOTE SOME OF YOUR STORIES FROM THREE MONTHS AGO THAT SAID THERE WERE 10,000 THERE. IT

JUST TURNED OUT IT WASN'T TRUE. BUT THERE ARE NOW AND THAT IS UNCANNY TOO.

Q: HODDING, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN SAY ABOUT THE AMERICAN CONFIDENCE, U.S. CONFIDENCE, AT THIS POINT IN THE SOVIETS SUPPORTING A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IN LIGHT OF THE CUBAN BUILD-UP?

A: I REALLY DON'T HAVE ANY SPECULATION ON THAT.

Q: YOU HAVE ASSURANCES FROM THE SOVIETS --

A: WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THE ETHIOPIANS SAY THEY ARE GOING TO STOP AT THE BORDER, ASSUMING THEY GET THAT FAR.

Q: WELL, THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE REACHED 10,000 DOESN'T SUGGEST TO YOU THEY ARE GOING TO GO ACROSS THE BORDER. IN FACT, YOU STILL BELIEVE THAT THEY WON'T.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 10 STATE 048869

A: I AM NOT TELLING YOU WHAT I BELIEVE. I AM TELLING YOU WHAT, OF COURSE, WE STRONGLY TRUST WILL HAPPEN, HOPE WILL HAPPEN. I MEAN THAT THERE WILL BE NO CROSSING OF BORDERS. BUT WE HAVE ALREADY SAID THAT. AND ALL I CAN TELL YOU, ALL I CAN REPORT TO YOU, IS WHAT HAS BEEN TOLD TO US ABOUT INTENTIONS.

Q: ARE WE CLEAR ON WHERE THE BORDERS ARE IN THAT AREA?

THE SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN BORDER USED TO BE RATHER -- IN FACT, I WAS JUST LOOKING AT A STATE DEPARTMENT MAP TODAY. IT HAS A DOTTED LINE THERE AND CALLS IT PROVISIONAL.

SO, HOW ARE WE GOING TO KNOW WHEN WE GET TO A BORDER?

A: YES. I THINK THAT IS ONE I AM NOT ABLE TO HELP WITH.

I WAS READING SOMETHING ON THAT MYSELF. I THINK THAT WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME AREA OF CONFUSION, THERE WON'T BE TOO MUCH CONFUSION.

Q: CAN YOU SEEK AN ANSWER FOR US ON -- PERHAPS WITH A MAP ATTACHED -- ON WHERE WE CONSIDER THE BORDERS OF SOMALIA TO BE SO THAT WE WILL HAVE SOME BENCHMARK AGAINST WHICH TO JUDGE THINGS MAYBE LATER ON?

A: I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO.

Q: IS AMERICAN POLICY, DOES IT REMAIN, AS YOU UNDERSTAND IT, THAT IF THERE IS A CROSSING WE WILL RECONSIDER OUR DENIAL OF ARMS TO SOMALIA?

A: THE AMERICAN POLICY IS EXACTLY AS THE SECRETARY STATED
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 11 STATE 048869

IT.

Q: WHICH IS WHAT?

A: EXACTLY AS HE STATED AT THE TIME OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE
WHEN ASKED THAT SUBJECT: THAT WE WOULD THEN HAVE TO RE-
ASSESS OUR POSITION, BUT THAT IS ALL IN THE LIGHT OF THAT
EVENT. I DON'T WANT TO LEAD YOU ANY FURTHER THAN THAT.

Q: HODDING, YOU SAID A MINUTE AGO THAT YOU HAVE TO GO
THROUGH VARIOUS COMPUTATIONS AND MATURATIONS BEFORE YOU
REACH A FIGURE THAT YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH. THE 8,000
TO 10,000 PLUS, THIS IS THE FIGURE WITH WHICH THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT CURRENTLY FEELS COMFORTABLE?

A: YES.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE JUST USED IT UP ON THE HILL. THAT
IS WHY I FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH IT.

Q: HODDING, THERE WAS A STORY ABOUT A WEEK AGO THAT
NIGERIA, WHICH IS HEADING THE OAU COMMITTEE THERE, HAS
SENT TROOPS TO ANGOLA WHO ARE REPLACING CUBAN TROOPS GOING
TO ETHIOPIA AND THAT NOW THERE SEEMS TO BE SOME LOGIC IN
THAT NOW.

COULD YOU COMMENT ON THAT REPORT?

ARE THE NIGERIANS GOING TO ANGOLA, SENDING TROOPS TO ANGOLA?

A: I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO CONFIRMATION ON SUCH A STORY.

Q: HODDING, SINCE WE NOW HAVE THAT INTERESTS SECTION IN
CUBA, IS THIS KIND OF BUILD-UP BROUGHT? DO WE USE OUR
INTERESTS SECTION TO BRING THIS TO THE ATTENTION OF THE
CUBANS?

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 12 STATE 048869

A: I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ISSUE IS RAISED REPEATEDLY IN
ONE FORM OR THE OTHER WITH THE CUBANS.

Q: SINCE THE SECRETARY'S NEWS CONFERENCE HAS IT BEEN RAISED

WITH THE CUBANS?

A: I AM CONFIDENT THAT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED REPEATEDLY WITH THE CUBANS AND IN DIFFERENT PLACES. I AM NOT GOING TO TRY TO SUGGEST WHERE.

Q: HODDING, THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION HAS MADE CRYSTAL CLEAR ITS OPPOSITION TO RACIAL SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AS WELL AS THE APPORTIONMENT OF ONE PART OF THE RHODESIAN LEGISLATURE.

THE QUESTION IS: ARE WE ALSO OPPOSED TO THE RACIAL SEGREGATION IN THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION OR NOT?

A: I WOULD SAY AS A GENERAL STATEMENT THAT WE FAVOR OPEN SOCIETIES, DEMOCRATIC IN RACIAL TERMS AND IN ALL TERMS.

Q: WELL, IF I COULD, I REALIZE THAT AS A GENERAL STATEMENT. I WONDER IF YOU COULD MAKE A SPECIFIC STATEMENT IN ANSWER TO MY QUESTION.

ARE WE OPPOSED TO THE RACIAL SEGREGATION THAT IS WRITTEN INTO THE LIBERIAN CONSTITUTION OR NOT?

A: LES, I DON'T THINK I HAVE EVER HAD THAT QUESTION PUT TO ME.

I WOULD FIRST HAVE TO CONFIRM WHAT IS IN THE CONSTITUTION, WHICH I WILL DO.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 13 STATE 048869

Q: THAT IS WONDERFUL.

A: I MEAN THEN AFTER THAT I WILL HAVE TO SEE WHETHER, IN FACT, THE ISSUE HAS ARISEN.

Q: YOU WON'T LET THIS DIE? I MEAN IT WON'T JUST DISAPPEAR?

A: LES, ONE OF US WILL NEVER LET IT DIE, I AM CONFIDENT.

Q: ALL RIGHT. FINE.

I UNDERSTAND THE PRESIDENT IS GOING TO LIBERIA. SO, IT IS A VERY APROPOS QUESTION.

THE LAST TIME WE GOT SOME KIND OF A BREAKDOWN ON THE CUBANS IN AFRICA WAS A NOVEMBER 17 REPORT. COULD WE GET A NEW ONE?

A: I JUST DON'T KNOW. I WILL SEE.

Q: OR AT LEAST A FIGURE OF HOW MANY THERE ARE.

A: WE REALLY PROBABLY ARE NOT GOING TO BE DOING IT AT GREAT REGULARITY, BUT I WILL SEE.

Q: BECAUSE THERE ARE NEW CUBANS IN ETHIOPIA BUT NOT NECESSARILY NEW CUBANS IN AFRICA.

A: YES, I UNDERSTAND THE QUESTION.

Q: HODDING, JUST TO COMPLETE SOMETHING YOU STATED EARLIER, THAT YOU'RE CONFIDENT THE ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED AT DIFFERENT PLACES WITH THE CUBANS -- WHAT HAS THEIR RESPONSE BEEN?

A: I CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT THE QUESTION WAS.
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 14 STATE 048869

Q: WELL, ABOUT THE BUILDUP OF CUBANS.

A: YES, WELL AGAIN I AM NOT GOING TO GO INTO THAT. LET ME JUST SAY OUR POSITION HAS BEEN MADE VERY CLEAR TO THEM, AND WE HAVE A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON IT.

Q: HODDING, DOESN'T THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LIAISON OFFICE OR AN INTEREST SECTION, MAKE IT EASIER TO DISCUSS WITH THE CUBANS THE BUILDUP?

A: YES, SURE.

Q: THEY WHY DON'T YOU GO ALL THE WAY AND ESTABLISH FULL RELATIONS?

A: BECAUSE AMONG THE REASONS THAT WE DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE WISE, IS THE BIG BUILDUP OF FORCES IN AFRICA.

Q: DOES THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAVE ANY REACTION TO THIS SAUDI APPEAL TO THE ARAB LEAGUE TO SEND ARMS AND SUPPORT TO SOMALIA?

A: NO. I DON'T.

Q: YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING ON THAT -- YOU DON'T FEEL THAT IT IS CONSTRUCTIVE, OR DESTRUCTIVE?

A: I DON'T HAVE ANY RESPONSE ON IT RIGHT NOW.

WHAT WE HAVE SAID GENERALLY, I COULD REPEAT AS POLICY: WE THINK AT THIS POINT THE BEST THING IS NOT FOR ANYONE TO

CONTRIBUTE TO A BUILDUP OF FORCES IN THAT REGION AND IN THAT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 15 STATE 048869

PARTICULAR CONFLICT. WE THINK IT OUGHT TO GO THE OTHER WAY
AROUND.

THAT'S A REITERATION OF AN OLD POLICY BUT THAT'S I, REALLY.

Q: HODDING, IN YOUR CONSIDERATION OF WALTER'S QUESTION,
WOULD YOU ALSO SPECIFICALLY TAKE THE QUESTION OF WHETHER
THERE ARE NOW CUBAN TROOPS -- AND IF SO, HOW MANY ASSISTING

GUERRILLAS IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST RHODESIA?

A: I THOUGHT I HAD TAKEN THAT AND ANSWERED IT BEFORE.

Q: YOU MAY HAVE; ALTHOUGH IN THE WAKE OF WHAT HAS BEEN
HAPPENING IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, THOSE NUMBERS MAY HAVE
CHANGED, TOO.

A: O... VANCE UNQUOTE VANCE

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